

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 3122

MANILA: FOR USADB

PARIS: FOR DEA

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA SIX

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, UN, AF
SUBJECT: AFGHAN GOVERNMENT'S OPIUM POPPY DESTRUCTION OPERATIONS
MOVE INTO NAGARHAR PROVINCE

REF: A. GENEVA 06000; B. PARIS 12163; C. GENEVA 05558

1. SUMMARY: AT A TIME WHEN THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IS DESTROYING
LARGE QUANTITIES OF OPIUM POPPIES, THE NARCOTICS-CONTROL
COMMITMENT OF THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP CAN NOT BE FAIRLY
QUESTIONED. END OF SUMMARY.

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2. I HAVE FOUND INTERESTING AND USEFUL THE PERSONAL OB-
SERVATION REPORTS ON CURRENT AFGHAN OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION
FROM MR. MICHAEL C. DEMETRE OF UNFDAC (REFTEL C) AND MR.
JOHN WARNER OF DEA/PARIS (REFTEL B). HOWEVER, THE SOBERING
PICTURE THEY PAINT HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY OFFSET BY SOME RECENT
DEVELOPMENTS. U.S. OBSERVERS HERE HAVE BEEN DISTURBED BY
THE FIELDS CITED BY MESSRS. DEMETRE AND WARNER, BUT HAVE ALSO

NOTED SIZEABLE REDUCTIONS IN OTHER TRADITIONAL OPIUM PRODUCTION AREAS. IN THE GANDAMAK REGION, FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY 30 JERIBS (ONE JERIB IS ONE-FIFTH OF A HECTARE) ARE PLANTED IN POPPIES THIS SEASON -- COMPARED WITH 2,000 JERIBS LAST YEAR. IN A CERTAIN SAROBI-JALALABAD DISTRICT WHICH GREW 2,400 JERIBS OF POPPIES IN 1977, ONLY 642 JERIBS HAVE NOW BEEN SIGHTED.

3. EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE ARE THE UN-CONFIRMED STATISTICS FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF POPPY CROPS BY THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT DURING THIS CURRENT SEASON:

A. 350 JERIBS OF POPPIES WERE DESTROYED IN HELMAND PROVINCE IN LATE JANUARY;

B. 250 JERIBS OF POPPIES WERE DESTROYED IN KANDAHAR PROVINCE IN LATE MARCH -- AND ANOTHER 75 JERIBS WERE DESTROYED IN MID-APRIL;

C. UN OBSERVERS VISITING THE UPPER HELMAND REGION IN MID-APRIL NOTED THAT APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD OF THE POPPY FIELDS HAD BEEN DESTROYED. (WE HAD NOT EXPECTED THIS QUID BEFORE UNFDAC DELIVERED ITS QUO, DEMETRE'S CROP-SUBSTITUTION PROJECT);

D. IN EARLY APRIL, A WEALTHY LANDOWNER NEAR LASKAR GAH LOST 30,000 SQUARE METERS OF POPPIES -- AND WAS IMPRISONED AS AN OBJECT LESSON.
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4. THE ABOVE DESTRUCTION STATISTICS INVOLVE RELATIVELY ISOLATED IRRIGATION AREAS WHERE THE AFGHAN POLICE CAN MORE EASILY STRIKE AT OFFENDERS. WE HAVE BEEN GREATLY ENCOURAGED, THEREFORE, TO LEARN THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA) HAS NOW BITTEN THE BULLET IN SOME OF THE TOUGHER PUSHTUN TRIBAL REGIONS OF NAGARHAR PROVINCE, THE HARDCORE OF AFGHAN PRODUCTION. SINCE EARLY APRIL, FORTY SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN WORKING DAILY ON A LARGE DESTRUCTION OPERATION IN THE JALALABAD REGION. THE OPERATION HAS BEEN ORDERED BY THE PROVINCE GOVERNOR, ABDUL KHALEQ RAFIQI, AND IS RECEIVING THE PERSONAL ATTENTION OF FARUK YAQUBI, CHIEF OF CRIMINAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. YAQUBI HAS BEEN REMAINING IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH CHRISTIAN MAGNUSSEN, THE LOCAL UN NARCOTICS ADVISOR, WHO HAS BEEN SUGGESTING TARGET AREAS AND CHECKING THE RESULTS. DESTRUCTION IN THE JALALABAD AREA NOW TOTALS SOME 350 JERIBS, OF WHICH MAGNUSSEN HAS PERSONALLY VERIFIED THE FIRST 115 AND SEEN YAQUBI'S PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF CHE LATTER. MAGNUSSEN IS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THIS CAMPAIGN AND EXPECTS FURTHER SIGNIFICANT RESULTS.

5. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THAT THE GOA

HAS ENGAGED IN AN ORGANIZED, LARGE-SCALE DESTRUCTION OF OPIUM
POPPIES (LAST SEASON, FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY A FEW FIELDS WERE
PLOUGHED UNDER IN THE CENTRAL HELMAND IRRIGATION DISTRICT).
IN VIEW OF THIS COMMENDABLE ACTIVITY, I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD
AT THIS TIME FAIRLY QUESTION THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE
AFGHAN LEADERSHIP (PARAGRAPH 8, REFTEL B). THIS EMBASSY INTENDS
TO WITHHOLD ITS FINAL JUDGMENT ON TOTAL 1978 PRODUCTION UNTIL
MORE FIELD INVESTIGATIONS CAN BE COMPLETED IN THE REMOTER
DISTRICTS AND THE MOST RELIABLE STATISTICS CAN BE ASSEMBLED.
END OF COMMENT

6. THE STATISTICS IN THIS MESSAGE, SUPPLIED BY THE UN
NARCOTICS ADVISOR, WERE CLEARED IN SUBSTANCE WITH THE DEA
SAIC, WHO IS NOW AWAY FROM KABUL ON A FIELD TRIP.
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